NCA
VOC FOR IOP/FN
BACKGROUNDER NO. 1-0761 MAY 11, 1976
JOSEPH SULLIVAN

CONGRESS GETS FOOD AID REQUEST

ANNCR:

IN WASHINGTON, PRESIDENT FORD HAS ASKED THE U.S. CONGRESS TO APPROVE A TWO HUNDRED MILLION DOLLAR CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT. VOA'S JOSEPH SULLIVAN HAS THE DETAILS.

VOICE:

THE CREATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT -- KNOWN AS IFAD -- WAS ONE OF THE PROPOSALS TO COME OUT OF THE WORLD FOOD CONFERENCE IN 1975. AND NEXT MONTH, A PLENIPOTENTIARY MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE UNITED NATIONS TO SIGN THE ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT ESTABLISHING THE FUND AND TO TAKE PLEDGES. THE WHITE HOUSE, IN PREPARING FOR THAT MEETING, HAS REQUESTED THE CONGRESS TO AUTHORIZE THE 200-MILLION DOLLAR U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO IFAD.

THE FUND WILL NEED PLEDGES OF EIGHT HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES. DANIEL PARKER, ADMINISTRATOR OF THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, TOLD THE CONGRESS THAT SUFFICIENT PLEDGES ARE NOW IN SIGHT FROM THE OECD COUNTRIES AND FROM THE NEWLY-CREATED SPECIAL FUND OF THE ORGANIZATION OF PETROLEUM EXPORTING COUNTRIES (OPEC) TO MEET THE TARGET. UNDER THE TERMS OF THE DRAFT AGREEMENT, IFAD CANNOT COME INTO FORCE UNTIL IT HAS BEEN RATIFIED WITH FIRM COMMITMENTS OF AT LEAST SEVEN HUNDRED FIFTY MILLION DOLLARS.

THE INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL FUND WOULD FINANCE PROGRAMS TO INTRODUCE, EXPAND OR IMPROVE FOOD PRODUCTION SYSTEMS. HIGHEST PRIORITY WOULD GO TO RAISING FOOD PRODUCTION AND NUTRITION LEVELS OF THE POPULATION IN THE POOREST FOOD-DEFICIT COUNTRIES. IT WOULD ALSO ASSIST OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WITH POTENTIAL FOR INCREASING FOOD PRODUCTION TO IMPROVE THE NUTRITION AND WELFARE OF THEIR POOREST PEOPLE.

MISTER PARKER, IN TESTIMONY BEFORE A SENATE COMMITTEE, SAID THE PROPOSED CREATION OF IFAD RECOGNIZES THAT INCREASING FOOD PRODUCTION AND ACHIEVING A BETTER BALANCE WITH POPULATION GROWTH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES ARE IMPERATIVE IF MASSIVE HUNGER AND MALNUTRITION ARE TO BE AVOIDED. THE FUND, HE OBSERVED, COULD ANSWER THE WORLD'S MOST URGENT AND BASIC DEVELOPMENT NEED, AND PROVIDE WHAT HE CALLED A CONSTRUCTIVE ATMOSPHERE AND A SENSE OF FORWARD MOVEMENT IN THE RECENTLY-PERCEIVED PROCESS OF ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE.

GH/RCS